



# Pictures Home

**Key Question:** How did soldiers record their experiences in the U.S.-Mexican War?

**Relevance to Student Knowledge:**

Students have had their photographs taken for many reasons, such as class photos, family portraits, sports teams, and special memories.

**Student Learning Objectives:**

Students will become familiar with the way US-Mexican War soldiers recorded their experiences.

**Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills**

*History:* 7.4(A) Identify individuals, events, and issues during the Mexican War

*Art:* 7.3 Understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement

**Materials Included**

- Master student worksheet **Make Your Own Daguerreotype Case**
- Teacher historical background information

**Teacher-Supplied Materials**

- Camera (optional)
- Copies of student worksheet **Make Your Own Daguerreotype Case**
- Pencils, colored pencils, crayons, markers
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Rulers
- Glue or Tape

**BACKGROUND:** On May 18, 1846 – nine days after the Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma and the Siege of Fort Brown - US troops occupied the Mexican City of Matamoros. Many American and Mexican entrepreneurs set up shop and sold goods and services to the soldiers.

One service was daguerreotypes (daguerre-o-types), an early form of photography made on a light sensitive silver-coated metallic plate and developed by mercury vapor. Daguerreotype saloons offered soldiers a new way to record their experiences – a visual memory.

Daguerreotypes were often kept in highly decorated cases. The following websites have more information and examples:

- [www.daguerre.org/resource/history/history.html](http://www.daguerre.org/resource/history/history.html) - Brief history of daguerreotypes (The Daguerreian Society)
- [videoindex.pbs.org/resources/usmexwar/primary/ph\\_12.html](http://videoindex.pbs.org/resources/usmexwar/primary/ph_12.html) – Digital images of U.S.-Mexican War daguerreotypes (KERA-PBS “The Mexican War” website)

## MANAGEMENT

1. Make photocopies of the student worksheet **How to Make a Daguerreotype Case**.
2. First teach students how to make their own daguerreotype case. That way, as students are being photographed, the rest of the class can work on the daguerreotype cases.
3. When taking picture of your students:
  - When dressing the student, have him/her button all buttons and tuck in the shirt to have a neat military appearance.
  - Have student sit very still while the photo is being taken.
4. If unable to take photographs or if a student does not wish to have their picture taken, students can draw a picture of themselves for this activity.

## Vocabulary

- Daguerreotype: An early photograph produced on a metal plate
- Daguerreotype case: Container to hold a daguerreotype
- Replica: A reproduction of an original item exact in all details; a copy
- Entrepreneur: One who organizes, manages, and takes on the risks of a business or enterprise

## LESSON

### Introduction

1. Tell students: There are many different types of pictures. Sometimes you take a picture because something funny or incredible happened. Sometimes you have a photographer take pictures – like when we do class pictures. When have you had your picture taken by a photographer? List responses.
2. Ask students: Think about the difference between when one of your friends or family takes a picture of you and when a photographer takes your picture. What's the difference? List responses. Elicit the following responses:
  - Have to pose for a photographer vs. snapping a spontaneous picture
  - Takes longer to have a picture taken by a photographer
  - Often wear certain clothes (e.g., team shirts, dress clothes, dance outfits)
3. Ask students: What clothes have you worn when you had your picture taken by a photographer? List responses.

### Guided Lesson

1. Explain to students that on May 18, 1846 –after the Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma and the Siege of Fort Brown - US troops occupied the Mexican City of Matamoros. Tell them that many American and Mexican entrepreneurs set up shop and sold goods and services to the soldiers. One man, Joseph R. Palmer, was a daguerreian who traveled with Taylor's Army from Corpus Christi to Matamoros. Taking a daguerreotype often took over five minutes.
2. Define *daguerreotype* or have students look up the definition.
3. Remind students that when you have your picture taken by a photographer it takes longer. Ask students: Does it take five minutes to take a photo?
  - a. **Optional:** Tell students: Imagine having to pose for five minutes while your picture was being taken. Let's see if we can sit still for just one minute. After one minute, tell students: Imagine having to sit still for four more minutes while your picture is being taken.
4. Ask students: Why do you think the soldiers had their photos taken? List responses.
5. Tell students: Today there are many different ways to take and share photos. How do we take and share photos today? List responses.

### Discovery

1. Tell students that they will have their picture taken. While some students are having their picture taken, the rest of the class will make a daguerreotype case.
2. Define *replica* or have students look up the definition.
3. Hand out and review the student worksheet **Make Your Own Daguerreotype Case**.
4. Have students make the daguerreotype cases while taking the photographs.

# LESSON

## Wrap-up Activities

1. Have students share what they wrote on and how they decorated their daguerreotype.

## Extensions

1. Have students compare/contrast the differences between daguerreotypes and modern photography.
2. Create a bulletin board display of the daguerreotypes.

**Student Evaluation/Assessment:** Observe each student for class participation.



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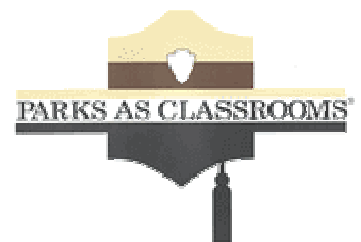
Palo Alto Battlefield  
National Historic Site  
1623 Central Blvd., Rm. 213  
Brownsville, TX 78520

Phone  
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## How to Make a Daguerreotype Case

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Think about how many pictures you have. You might even have a picture with you right now.

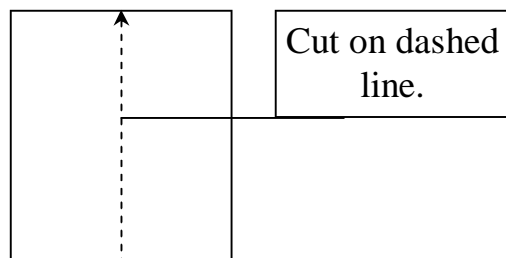
In 1846, the only pictures were daguerreotypes (early photographs made on a metal plate). Daguerreotypes were very expensive, very rare, and very valuable.

For protection, daguerreotypes were kept in hinged cases which looked like a book. Cases were decorated with designs, such as cannon and fancy shapes, on the front and around the frame.

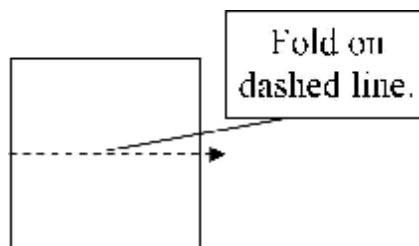
Get these materials to make your own daguerreotype case!

- ◇ Ruler
- ◇ Scissors
- ◇ Piece of construction paper
- ◇ Glue or tape
- ◇ Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

1. Cut the paper in half to make two pieces.



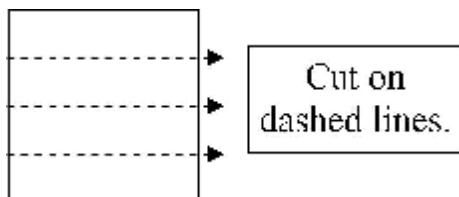
2. Fold both pieces in half with a hamburger fold.



3. Fold one piece either at the top or on the left.

Decorate the outside.

4. To make the frame, cut the other piece into four 1/2 inch strips.



5. Decorate the strips for the frame.

6. When your picture is ready, write the following on the picture:

- Your name (or the name of a soldier)
- Date (the date would be after the U.S. occupied the City of Matamoros, which was on May 18, 1846 – nine days after the Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma and the Siege of Fort Brown)
- One sentence about why your daguerreotype is so valuable

7. When your picture is ready, put it inside the case. Put one strip around each edge of your picture. Glue or tape down the strips.

	STRIP	
STRIP	PICTURE	STRIP
	STRIP	